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EAST ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the East Asia - Pacific Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

CONTENTS

September 22, 1975

CAMBODIA

Sihanouk in Phnom Penh.	1
Cabinet Clues	4

JAPAN

Tokyo Disappoints Third World	6
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Cambodia: Sihanouk in Phnom Penh
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The initial warm welcome Prince Sihanouk received when he arrived in Phnom Penh on September 9 has been followed up by a round of ceremonial functions at which the Prince has been accorded full honors as "head of state." The day after he arrived, the cabinet paid a call on Sihanouk, and he presided over a cabinet meeting. The Prince has also been the guest of honor at receptions, an "artistic soiree," and a mass rally sponsored by the "people" and the armed forces at the Phnom Penh sports stadium on September 12. He has also entertained Chinese Ambassador Sun Hao.

The speeches of communist leaders on these occasions have congratulated Sihanouk for his "patriotic activities." In a speech on September 9, Deputy Prime Minister Khieu Samphan expressed "warmest thanks" to the Prince for "fulfilling revolutionary tasks on the international scene." In a later speech Samphan continued his praise saying that the contributions of Sihanouk and Prime Minister Penn Nouth had raised the international prestige of Cambodia and its revolution to "great heights." However, the communists have not mentioned Sihanouk's future travel plans, nor have they divulged any specifics concerning his future role in Cambodian affairs.

Communist speakers have used Sihanouk's arrival to emphasize once again their victory over US "imperialism" and the Lon Nol "clique." They have also referred several times to the resolutions passed by the special national congress held in late April. That congress decided on the retention of Sihanouk as titular head of the government and also set the lines of the new Cambodia as independent, neutral, democratic, unified, classless, and having territorial integrity--Phnom Penh's usual propaganda themes.

September 22, 1975

TOP SECRET UMBRA

While using the arrival of Sihanouk to portray their victory in glowing terms, the communists undoubtedly recognize that they have a long way to go before they achieve their goals. In his speech to the mass rally, Khieu Samphan said current reconstruction efforts only are the "beginning" and he noted optimistically that Cambodia will soon have a "brand new outlook." Samphan and other communist leaders have said recently that their government has only "fundamentally" solved the problem of "popular livelihood" and that food is sufficient rather than abundant--oblique references to continuing food shortages.

The speeches delivered at the rally by "representatives of the army, people, and women," the frequent references to the National United Front and the Royal Government of National Union, and the absence of references to the "revolutionary organization"--the euphemism for the Khmer Communist Party--attest to the emphasis the communists are placing for the time being on maintaining the appearance of a broadly based government. Almost all of the speeches have referred to "solidarity," and the communists have gone out of their way to include Sihanouk in the facade of unity. On September 9, Khieu Samphan lauded the Prince for having "personally joined the forces of unity" in building the revolutionary society. These sentiments may be designed to reassure the Prince that he has a role to play as a symbol of unity and as an international figure. The communist leadership no doubt is also aware that its allies, especially the Chinese, as well as friends in the nonaligned world are probably following the leadership's treatment of the Prince closely.

For his part, Sihanouk's public response to his reception has been equally warm. At a reception on September 9, the Prince said he was happy to rejoin

September 22, 1975

TOP SECRET UMBRA

TOP SECRET UNREP
the Cambodian "family" and to share in the "sweet and the bitter forever" with his friends, but he, too, has not mentioned his own future activities. He has confined his remarks to congratulations on the military victory and emphasis on Cambodia as an example to Third World countries seeking "salvation and liberation."

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[REDACTED] Sihanouk told a member of his entourage before he left Peking that he regarded his own future as "highly uncertain" and had no alternative to visiting Cambodia to judge the situation himself. Behind the ostensible warmth on both sides, the relationship between Sihanouk and the communists undoubtedly remains uneasy, and the Prince is almost certainly assessing the limitations on his movements and duties to determine how much scope the communists will allow him. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM/NO DISSEM ABROAD/BACKGROUND USE ONLY/CONTROLLED DISSEM)

September 22, 1975

Cambodia: Cabinet Clues

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Radio Phnom Penh's account of a Royal Government of National Union cabinet meeting on September 10, presided over by Prince Sihanouk, has provided a few clues concerning the positions of some members of the Cambodian leadership.

Several ministers delivered reports. Deputy Prime Minister for National Defense Son Sen reported on the "military situation" and on the "management and organization" of the army. The fact that Phnom Penh listed Son Sen's "detailed" report first and his delivery of the welcoming address when Sihanouk arrived in Cambodia suggest that Son Sen probably plays a key role in the apparent triumvirate that includes the other deputy prime ministers--Khieu Samphan and Ieng Sary. Although Samphan retains his title as army commander in chief, he does not have a military background, and his participation in military affairs may be secondary to overall policy and administrative roles.

Other reports presented at the cabinet meeting dealt with post-war economic recovery. Information and Propaganda Minister Hu Nim reported on the "people and production." Although Phnom Penh had not mentioned Nim since mid-May, his re-emergence at Sihanouk's welcome ceremony and his report at the cabinet meeting indicate that he is an active member of the government.

In contrast, the broadcast of the cabinet meeting did not mention Interior Minister Hou Youn. Like Khieu Samphan and Ieng Sary, Youn formerly held a portfolio in the Sihanouk government and was a leader in the communist insurgency. However, Phnom Penh has not referred to the interior minister since the communist take-over, and the continued omission of his name and title suggest that he may have been downgraded in the hierarchy.

September 22, 1975

Other ministers who presented reports were Minister of National Economy and Finance Koy Thuon, who spoke on industry and commerce, and Minister of Public Works and Telecommunications Toch Phoeun, who reported on the "status of communication lines." Both individuals are long-time communists. Phnom Penh's highlighting of their reports is additional evidence of the high priority the communist leadership places on economic recovery and development and suggests that they are among the more important members of the government. (CONFIDENTIAL NO FOREIGN DISSEM)

September 22, 1975

Japan Disappoints Third World

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Tokyo is surprised and dismayed over the unusual public self-criticism by Toshio Kimura, head of the Japanese delegation at the recently concluded special economic session of the UN General Assembly. Kimura, who was foreign minister under the Tanaka regime and is a ranking Diet expert on foreign affairs, delivered a speech at the special session that represented a vague expression of Japanese willingness to "study" the problems dividing the developed and underdeveloped nations and contained little in the way of meaningful proposals.

But in an emotional outburst to Japanese press representatives after the speech, Kimura reportedly called his speech "really disgraceful," claiming that it jeopardized the trust of the Third World and created the "impression" that Japan was one of the most conservative among the developed nations. According to Kimura, his speech was "gutted" by tight-fisted Finance Ministry bureaucrats, who opposed any specific suggestions as to how Japan might lend greater assistance to the Third World.

The extent to which Kimura's views are shared by other elements in the government is not clear. During his tenure as foreign minister, Kimura tried hard to cultivate an image as a friend of the Third World, and he must have been rather galled at the derisive reaction from some in the UNGA audience to his speech.

By bringing the controversy out into the open, Kimura may hope to put pressure on the Finance Ministry to be more forthcoming on Third World matters in the future. Kimura reportedly intends to urge Prime Minister Miki to ensure that Japan makes an effort to redeem itself at the UN Conference on Trade and Development in May.

September 22, 1975

Since Kimura's role as chief delegate to the special UNGA session was only a one-shot deal-- Foreign Minister Miyazawa will address the regular UNGA session which just convened--he is relatively free to speak out. At this stage, Kimura is not really going anywhere in the party anyway. He was forced out by the party's right wing as foreign minister when Miki succeeded Tanaka; the right was suspicious of Kimura's efforts when he was foreign minister to improve relations with China, North Korea, and the Third World. Although Finance Minister Ohira obviously was not happy with Kimura's remarks, Kimura's public criticism of Finance Ministry bureaucrats will probably earn him the secret admiration of some fellow party members, who have traditionally distrusted the bureaucracy. (CONFIDENTIAL)

September 22, 1975

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Next 6 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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